

Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry



Presented by
Georgia Heard

Ten Lessons Poetry Can Teach Prose

*"I went to the school of poetry in order to learn to write prose."
Grace Paley*

Images – writing with picture words – show don't tell

Metaphor/Simile – saying things in a new way

Details – descriptive words – focus on the small particulars

Word Awareness – use unusual, surprising words –
concrete words – sounds of words

Trains Your Ear – the music of words – what sounds "right"

Patterns/Repetition – repeating words and sentences

Beginnings/Endings – techniques for opening and closing
the door of a poem for the reader

Point of View – trying on different points of view

Voice – personality behind the words

Re-vision – taking out unnecessary words – images –
cracking open words and sentences

Poetry Invitation

Valentine for Ernest Mann
Naomi Shihab Nye

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"
and expect it to be handed back to you
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.
Anyone who says, "Here's my address,
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.
So I'll tell you a secret instead:
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,
they are sleeping. They are the shadows
drifting across our ceilings the moment
before we wake up. What we have to do
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife
two skunks for a valentine.
He couldn't understand why she was crying.
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."

And he was serious. He was a serious man
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly
just because the world said so. He really
liked those skunks. So, he re-invented them as valentines and they became
beautiful.

At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding
in the eyes of skunks for centuries
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we re-invent whatever our lives give us
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock in your drawer, the person you
almost like, but not quite

And let me know.

Poems for Young Poets

Safety Pin by Valerie Worth

Closed, it sleeps
On its side
Quietly.
The silver
Image
Of some
Small fish;

Opened, it snaps
Its tail out
Like a thin
Shrimp, and looks
At the sharp
Point with a
Surprised eye.

Things

By Eloise Greenfield

Went to the corner
Walked in the store
Bought me some candy
Ain't got it no more
Ain't got it no more

Went to the beach
Played on the shore
Built me a sandhouse
Ain't got it no more
Ain't got it no more

Went to the kitchen
Lay down on the floor
Made me a poem
Still got it
Still got it

Poem by Langston Hughes

I loved my friend.
He went away from me.
There's nothing more to say.

The poem ends,
Soft as it began -
I loved my friend

Go Wind

by Lilian Moore

Go wind, blow
Push wind, swoosh
Shake things
Take things
Make things
fly.

Ring things.
Swing things.
Fling things
high.

Go wind, blow
Push things – whew.
No wind, no
Not me -
not me.

Perform a Poem

Memorize the poem and make a short (2 or 3 minute) creative presentation to the class.

Singing – Sing the words of the poem.

Dancing – Do a dance inspired by the poem.

Music – Write or play a musical instrument inspired by the poem.

Drama – Act the poem out.

Art – Make a painting, drawing, collage, sculpture or photograph inspired by the poem.

Rap – Perform the poem as a rap.

Cooking – Create a recipe and cook something that relates to the poem.

Photograph Album – Create a short photograph album in response to the poem.

Choral Reading – Perform the poem as a choral reading

Other Ideas:

Multi-Genre Self Portrait Anthology

For this project, you will be creating an anthology, a collection of work, which reflects who you are. Your anthology will contain pieces that show your personality, the things you love, and your beliefs. Your anthology will consist of several different genres. Some of the pieces will be originals that you create, and others will be items written by other authors that are meaningful to you and represent who you are. Although each person's anthology will be unique, they will all contain the following:

Cover

Table of Contents

3 Original Poems (written by you)

For example:

- List poem
- Image poem
- "I Am From" poem

1 Non-print Self Portrait

3 "Choice" Pieces

For example:

- Poems
- Quotes
- An excerpt from a memoir or short story
- Comics
- Song lyrics
- Figurative language (similes, metaphors, etc.)
- Other _____

Reflections

Each piece in the anthology needs to have a short reflection. This reflection will explain to the reader why you chose to include a piece in your anthology and how it connects to you. Therefore, you must carefully select each item that you place in your anthology.

My People

By Langston Hughes

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

Crickets

By Valerie Worth

Crickets
Talk
In the tall
Grass
All
Late summer
Long.
When
Summer
Is gone,
The dry
Grass
Whispers
Alone.

Surprise

By Beverly McLoughland

The biggest
Surprise
On the library shelf
Is when you suddenly
Find yourself
Inside a book—

You wonder how
The author knew.

THE TREE ON THE CORNER

I've seen
the tree on the corner
in spring bud
and summer green.
Yesterday
it was yellow gold.

Then a cold
wind began to blow.
Now I know –
you really do not see
a tree
until you see
its bones.

Lillian Moore

FOGHORNS

The foghorns moaned
in the bay last night
so sad
so deep
I thought I heard the city
crying in its sleep

Langston Hughes

NEW SOUNDS

New sounds to
walk on
today,

dry
leaves
talking
in hoarse
whispers
under bare trees.

Lillian Moore

UMBRELLAS

It's raining in the city.
I hope it rains for hours.
All of the umbrellas
Open up like flowers.

Come look out my window!
Polka dots in lines
Wag their stems and tangle,
Tilt to read the signs.

Plaid ones cross at corners,
Striped ones wave about.
It's raining in the city;
The flowers have come out.

Maxine W. Kumin

UNTIL I SAW THE SEA

Until I saw the sea
I did not know
that wind
could wrinkle water so,

I never knew
that sun
could splinter a whole sea

Nor did I know before,
a sea breathes in and out
upon a shore.

Lillian Moore

Choosing the Best Words

Directions: Fill in the blank spaces with the “best” words you can think of. The “best” words are usually: surprising, imagistic, concise and musical. Then read the original poem and compare your choices with the poet’s.

Oil Slick by Judith Thurman

There, by the curb,
a leaky truck
has _____
a grease-pool,

a black, pearly
slick
which _____
when the sun
strikes it.

I could spend
all day

its flashy colors
with a stick.

Endings

Fueled

Fueled
by a million
man-made
wings of fire –
the rocket tore a tunnel
through the sky –
and everybody cheered.
Fueled
only by a thought from God –
the seedling
urged its way
through the thickness of black –
and as it pierced
the heavy ceiling of the soil –
and launched itself
up into outer space –
no
one
even
clapped.

Marice Hans

Poem

I loved my friend.
He went away from me.
There's nothing more to say.
The poem ends,
soft as it began -
I loved my friend.

Langston Hughes

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Poetry Books for Young Poets

All the Small Poems and Fourteen More by Valerie Worth

Rich Lizard and Balloons and Other Poems by Deborah Chandra

Honey, I Love by Eloise Greenfield

I Feel the Same Way and I Thought I Heard the City by Lilian Moore

Creatures of Earth, Sea and Sky and This Place I Know: Poems of Comfort by Georgia Heard

Confetti: Poems for Children by Pat Mora

Lemonade Sun, The Spin of Things and Over in the Pink House by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Spin a Soft Black Song by Nikki Giovanni

A Writing Kind of Day by Ralph Fletcher

There Was a Place and Other Poems (*out of print*) by Myra Cohn Livingston

The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury selected by Jack Prelutsky

Frederick by Leo Lionni *

The Other Way to Listen by Bryd Baylor *

Poetry Books For Older Poets

ten poems to change your life selected by Roger Housden

what have you lost? selected by Naomi Shihab Nye

Blushing collected by Paul Janeczko

Delights & Shadows by Ted Kooser

Books by Georgia Heard

For the Good of the Earth and the Sun, Heinemann, 1989

Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way,
Heinemann, 1995

Creatures of Earth, Sea and Sky, Boyds Mills Press, 1992

Words of True Poems: Poems on Audiotape, Heinemann, 1998

Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle
School, Heinemann, 1999

Songs of Myself: Poetry and Art, Mondo, 2000

This Place I Know: Poems of Comfort, Candlewick, 2002

The Revision Toolbox: Teaching Techniques That Work,
Heinemann, 2002

Giving Students the Vision and Tools to Reach for Wider Possibilities As Writers



Presented by
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Living with A Piece of Writing for One Week

1. **Monday**: Close your eyes and listen:
What do you notice about the piece?
What does it make you feel?
2. **Tuesday**: Illustrate a favorite scene or image.
Why was it your favorite?
3. **Wednesday**: In what way does this piece connect to your life? Bring in a personal connection artifact: a book; poem; photograph; letter, etc.
4. **Thursday**: Share connections.
5. **Friday**: Craft talk: What do you notice about how this piece is written: word choice; structure; imagery; point of view, etc.

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Craft Talk

Title and Author of Piece:

This is part of the poem where the author did a wonderful job “showing” and not “telling.” What part of the poem did you see in your mind most clearly? What words gave you a vivid picture in your head?

This is part of the poem where the author used vivid and/or unusual words. What words stood out for you? What strong verbs did she use? What strong adjectives did she use? What strong nouns did she use?

Discuss the title of the poem, “Enchantment.” Why isn’t the poem called “June Bugs?”

Discuss the beginning and the ending of the poem.

Enchantment

By Joanne Ryder

**On warm summer nights
the porch becomes our living room
where Mama takes her reading
and Dad and I play games
in the patch of brightness
the lamp scatters on the floor.
From the darkness, others come—
small round bodies
clinging to the screens
which separate us
from the yard beyond.
Drawn to our light,
the June bugs watch our games
and listen to our talk till bedtime
when Mama darkens the porch
and breaks the spell
that holds them close to us.**

Writing Invitation

From Writing Toward Home by Georgia Heard

From an Onion to My Grandmother

A year after my ninety-nine year old grandmother died I was sitting in the kitchen drinking tea and staring fixedly at the table on which were a few onions. I began to write in my journal about the onion in front of me: skin like paper, like the layers of rock in the Grand Canyon, layers of skin, my grandmother's soft, papery hands, my grandmother buried in the layers of earth and bone and other lives, my grandmother's face looking up out of the earth, her skin frozen.

When I finished I sat back a little startled. How had this journey happened – from an onion to my grandmother? I hadn't known I was still mourning my grandmother's death – but as I began to write about the onion I uncovered my grief. That morning I hadn't planned to write about my grandmother, let alone imagine her in a grave – but writing forged its own way through my psyche.

For many writers, freewriting or stream-of consciousness writing is the way to find the trail. This is especially true if we have negative memories of someone's harsh criticism, if we have writer's block, if we're afraid to write what we really feel, if we've lived the life of daily chores too intensely, or if we have lots of ideas but don't know how to begin.

.....

Pick a word – a noun, something concrete – and put it at the top of the page. It could be an arbitrary word: Onion. Feather. River. Sponge. Or it could be something you need to think more deeply about: Father. Time. Love. Now begin to write everything that comes into your mind. Keep at it for at least two pages. Let yourself wander, anything – especially if it's bizarre and crazy – goes. Follow the path, and don't be afraid if it veers off somewhere else. Afterward, go back and jot down next to your freewriting the links, the journey from one thought to another. Uncover the connections that you made. After all, writing is meandering – sometimes a stroll, sometimes a fast walk – to a place of dreams, memories, and thoughts you didn't know existed.